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Harold:

You have flowers? Christ! Around here we would be happy merely to see the ground. Everything is covered by a few inches of snow encrusted by a layer of ice. We know that the end of all this is near, but we don't see it yet. I envy you.

I would be most happy to read ~~the~~ your latest writing and comment on it. I have not heard from Howard in quite a long time (although I wrote a few weeks ago-- nothing important), and suppose that he is pretty busy with school. In the first year of university the student takes on some awesome burdens, and it is very difficult for him to devote himself intensely to too many things at one time. So I leave him alone unless something important comes up. And lately nothing that I have done seems worth mentioning. I'm just fooling haphazardly with the 26; it has not been fruitful. Getting your latest writing will give me something useful to do.

I have not bothered you with mail for reasons similar to those applying to Howard. I have not done anything worth mentioning, and I know that you are busy and impaired. Speaking of your impairment, the form of your recent typing reminded me of Archie in the Archie and Mehitible stories. Archie, you may recall, was the cockroach who learned to type by jumping from key to key on an old typewriter. He could never manage the upper case letters because it required depressing two keys at once. The caps are a nuisance, anyway, and I would be happy if convention changed and we were allowed to drop them.

Anyway, I understand why you are not writing often, so don't bother to explain. It is enough to know that you will be in touch when there is need. Actually, the diminished correspondence wasn't all that unwelcome this year, since it seems I have much less time now than in the past-- probably, though, it's a question of making time when there is need. The construction work on my house has bitten deeply into it, but it has brought some very satisfying rewards. I am now almost complete finished rebuilding the rec room in the basement. I need only to lay a good tile floor and set doors in the closets. Otherwise it's done-- studs, insulation, paneling, ceiling-- and really looks nice. When this is over I'll move into the laundry room and rebuild that. I have already all but finished a work room in the basement. I find the whole business very gratifying, perhaps because it's so different from what I usually do. And in the very boring phases of construction, this activity lends itself to very deep concentration. During the three weeks that I spent alone last summer painting the inside of the house my depth of concentration was almost hypnotic. Painting really does it for me. Friends wondered why I didn't go out of my mind with boredom,

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for I was at it 12 hours a day, seven days a week, for three weeks straight. There's another thing, too. I tend to cherish solitude more than most people. It's not that I'm a recluse and seek it out, but I enjoy it when it comes my way.

Something just came up and I have to stop. In writing this I did not have your recent mail here, so I'll mail this after I review the mail and see if anything needs comment. If so, I'll add a p.s.

Stay well.

Still,

Dick

P.S. ~~III~~ Howard sent me a copy of his "letter to the editor". I thought it excellent

I'll write to Howard and have him send me the epilogue when he is finished with it.